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KICKER OBSERVATIONS

Side-Lights on the Land Question.--Some Good Democratic Authority that Private Ownership of the Earth is a Crime Against Mankind.

The city wage-earner is concerned about his job. The man on the land is also concerned about his job. Both want to know how Socialism would affect them. We know how capitalism gouges both. And since this is a farming community it may be well to see what effect Socialism would have on the men who feed and clothe the people of the world.

I am not an authority on Socialism and can only give it as I understand it, as gathered from other writers. Socialism is a scientific plan for the re-arrangement of society so that none can live upon the labor of others. Each will receive the full product of his labor, and profit, rent and interest will be abolished.

The chief aim of the farmers' union is the elimination of the useless "middlemen" between the farmers and the market, and again between the factory and the farmer. But there is one class of useless middlemen they seem to have no quarrel with. They will "divide up" their crops with their landlords—and take of their hats while delivering the goods.

Socialism would put the landlord, as such, out of business. It would reserve the land for those who want to till it, and the man behind the plow would not be required to "divide up" his product with any useless individual—just because of laws made by and for the men who profit by them.

As I see it, that is the only change that would be necessary to settle the land question—the elimination of the worse than useless landlord. His right to take a part of what you produce is not a natural right, but a man-made privilege. And what man makes he can also unmake.

Of course you will now want to know the details of how this can be brought about. At Chicago the Republicans declared for "tariff revision." Nobody knows what the Republicans expect to do with the tariff, and I don't suppose many care. At Denver the Democrats declared for "tariff revision and reduction." Nobody knows what the Democrats propose to do—and they don't. But when it comes to Socialism, then everybody wants to know.

At this time the government holds title to every inch of ground in the United States. All other titles to land are subject to the government's title. This may seem strange to some of you—yet it is a fact. I do not own much ground, yet I have some. I can keep it so long as I pay the tribute, or rent, demanded by the government. But as soon as I fail to pay this rent (commonly called taxes) the government takes my ground from me and lets someone else have it who will pay the rent.

Capitalism has supplied another, or third party, who also demands rent, or tribute. This fellow usually lives well and gives no useful service in return. He is the landlord—the fellow that you tenant farmers "divide up" with. This is the "middleman" that Socialism will wipe out.

I hope not to shock some of my Democratic friends by some good authority I am about to produce. There is a very brilliant lawyer up at Jefferson City that holds quite an important position, yet the capitalist papers have formed a "conspiracy of silence" toward him, and his name seldom appears in print. His name is Speed Mosby, and he was appointed pardon attorney by Gov. Folk. He is a Democrat and also a Single Taxer. This means that he is messing around the edges of Socialism. I was a Single Taxer before I became a Socialist. The chief difference between a Single Taxer and a Socialist is that the former wants to eliminate only the landlord-capitalist, while Socialism stands for the wiping out of the whole brood of capitalists.

I have before me a pamphlet containing an article by Mr. Mosby on the land question. It is too lengthy to publish in full, but will reproduce some of the most striking paragraphs. Perhaps you will remember that, in his last message to the legislature, Gov. Folk recommended the elimination of taxes on the products of labor, holding that the land tax would be sufficient to cover the expense of government. The Single Tax theory is that the public creates land values and should, in return for such values, receive rent or taxes, and that no tax should be

placed on values created by the labor of individuals—this being considered a tax or fine upon industry.

To illustrate: I own several lots in Edna, Ansell, Chaffee, Oran and Benton. I bought them to hold for profit. I have three lots at Oran that are assessed at \$10 each. They cost me \$65 each. If a man who wants a home should buy one of these lots and build a house on it, up would go the assessment. It is a fine on industry—on improvements. Mr. Mosby writes:

"The public makes land values. The individual, as such, can make nothing but the product of his individual labor. Justice to all is the duty of each. Let us, then, give to the public that which belongs to the public, and to Labor that which is Labor's. Tax land values, and exempt the produce of Labor. Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's."

"Have you ever lived in a town whose population was steadily declining? If so, I hope you have owned no real estate there, for if you did you certainly found that as the people went away your land values went with them. But if you own land in a community which is daily becoming more populous, I congratulate you, for land values will continue to grow and be enhanced by every increase in population. Every babe that is born will add to your values. Every family that comes to live and labor among you will make your real estate more valuable."

"No man, severing himself from civilization and from all communication with the civilized world, can go into the heart of a wilderness and add one jot or tittle to the value of the land he finds there. All the improvements he may make can add nothing to the value of that land. But let a railroad pass that way, to give him transportation facilities, and a telegraph or telephone to put him in communication with the outside world, and the situation will change. Let other men come in and build cities and towns and lay out farms around him, and the value of his land will leap from naught into the thousands. If he has been wise enough, or strong enough, to secure a legal deed to all the land in his vicinity, no man can go there to labor or to build, except on terms dictated by him. He is the lord paramount of the soil."

With the increase of population and industry—not his industry, however—his land will continue to increase in value. He need not toil; he need not spin; he need do nothing, and every soul that is born into that community will increase to some extent, the value of his land.

Who gave this man the right to take that which is made by the labor of other men? Who gave him the right to appropriate to his own use the values created by the increasing growth of humanity? Who gave him the right to take from the nursing babe the values which it brings into this world as its birthright? Who? The law—the law: not God's law, for it is written in the book of Leviticus, 25th chapter, 3rd verse: 'The land shall not be sold forever; for the land is mine, for you are strangers and sojourners with me.' And again, the Power that tipped Isaiah's lips with hallowed fire thunders forth the words: 'Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.'

"Yes, it is the municipal law—the same old man-made law which compelled Socrates to drink the hemlock, and sanctioned the crucifixion of Christ; that law which made slaves of Terence and Epictetus, took the lives of Boethius and Savonarola, dragged Huss to the stake, and sent Russell and Sydney to the block. It was the law, that sent the Apostle to Rome in chains; the law, that banished Cicero and Demosthenes, and Aristides the Just, from the lands whose liberties they had tried to save. It was the law, the glorious Common Law, in whose name Richard Rumbold was sent to the scaffold, where he declared with his latest breath in tones that will ring in the ears of humanity for a thousand generations: 'No one comes into this world with a saddle on his back, neither any boot or spurred to ride him!' No great reformer ever arose in defense of his country's liberties without incurring the gibes, the jeers and the scorn of those whose fortunes are fortified by adjudicated wrong and the buttressed infamies of the law. No imperial edict was ever issued but in the name of the law. It is this law that gives a man the right to rob the unborn babe of its birthright."

"Property in land is as old as the institution of human slavery. One is not less venerable than the other. But the antiquity of law



THE GHOST! St. Louis Star-Chronicle.

Kansas City Independent.—Certain defeated candidates, now trying to find out the full extent of the frauds responsible for their failure to win, are being subjected to the strongest sort of pressure from party leaders who are anxious that nothing be done to injure the chances of party success this fall. It is to be trusted that this vicious argument will fail of its purpose. * * The cry that "the party must not be hurt" is the cry of the crook. * * There is little doubt that complete investigation will show a criminal pact between Republicans and Democrats in Kansas City and St. Louis. * * Thorough investigation is bound to result in good to both parties, especially if the inquiry as urged by Mr. Ball, goes after the people "higher up." A splendid opportunity is offered to send a lot of "bosses" to the penitentiary, and it should not be allowed to slip by. A good prosecutor should have no trouble in securing a confession from some tool that will implicate the men really responsible for the primary outrages. And then, if care is taken to keep the jury from being packed, and if the case is tried before some courageous judge that cannot be reached by money or political power, we MAY have the happiness of seeing some rich crooks wearing the stripes.

cannot hedge it about with any peculiar divinity. The justice of a law is its only sacred feature, and lacking this it deserves the respect of none, nor any morally bound to obey it. Equality of opportunity is the natural right of all mankind. Men cannot surrender their natural rights; when they attempt to do so, their acts do not bind posterity. A natural right is a vested right. The statutes of limitation do not run against human liberty. A vested right founded upon wrong is a vested wrong. Natural rights cannot be forfeited, nor special privileges justly acquired. No man can give another the right to rob him. Consent of the injured cannot authorize injustice. In the discussion of natural rights, therefore, precedent, in the very nature of things, can have no binding force. Ill does it become an American to quibble about precedent, for the Declaration of Independence was itself wholly beyond the municipal law, and utterly without judicial precedent or authority. But, as William H. Seward said, "there is a higher law than the constitution; higher, indeed, than any human enactment—to that law the immortal Declaration conformed." * * * "Our quarrel is not with landlords, but with landlordism. Nor have we any grievance against the rich. It is not wrong to possess wealth, but it is wrong to deprive others of the opportunity to do so, for without the enjoyment of equal opportunities the hope of liberty is idle and the thought of equal rights is vain."

"No man has a right to hold land out of use, or to tie it up for the purpose of reaping the increment which is certain to accrue by reason of industrial development and the growth of population. Every landowner has this right to-day. Under the present system, any man may hold the exclusive property to as much land as he may be able to acquire, whether he cares to use it or not, and so holding it, he may absolutely refuse to let other men the right to live or labor upon it. The constant tendency in any nation is for the land to pass into the hands of fewer and fewer persons, and, as population increases, for a constantly increasing proportion to become landless each year. This has been the unvarying history of every nation that has ever existed. More than 70 per cent of the families of the United States to-day are landless. Think of it! Seventy per cent of the American families without a foot of ground that they can call their own—no place whereon to erect a human habitation. They are renters, tenants by the courtesy of another, living upon the soil under the conditions prescribed by those who own the soil."

"I believe, with Horace Greeley, that 'he who has no clear inherent right to live somewhere, has no right to live at all.' If a few men

have the right to own the land absolutely, then the right of the landless to live is conditioned upon their compliance with the terms dictated by those who own the land. If a number of individuals have the right to possess the earth absolutely to the exclusion of any of their fellow men, they have the unquestioned power to deny to their fellow men the very right to existence; for man is a land animal, and he can live only by close and frequent contact with the earth."

When nations become densely populated, the landless are at the mercy of those who own the land. A knowledge of this fact, doubtless, is what led Shakespeare to exclaim, in Richard II, 'Landlord of England, art thou not a king?' The landlord is king to-day, in republic and empire alike. Shakespeare saw the truth. He was too intelligent not to have seen it. This great truth, that all men have an equal right to live and labor upon the earth which God has given to all, is the fundamental human right that has been struggling for recognition through all the centuries. Great men in every age have seen it, and recognized it, but it remained for Henry George to point out the way for its free, fair and unrestricted exercise."

"The land question is the oldest political issue of which we have any knowledge. But all attempts to solve the problem have heretofore failed, because men failed to see that a little wrong was as pernicious and hurtful to mankind as a big wrong; for great things grow from small beginnings, and the history of the ages shows that out of the infinitesimal germs of injustice have grown the colossal wrongs which have cursed humanity from the Creation down to the present hour."

"Until Henry George unfolded his great plan to the world the most of the reforms proposed did not go to the heart of the question by attacking the right of private property in land. Again and again, amid the civil broils of ancient Rome, the lands were re-allotted and subdivided, but the principle of absolute private ownership being recognized, and the land owners being allowed to reap the values created by the public, conditions always became worse. Rome, like all of the great nations that have either preceded or come after her, became a commonwealth of millionaires and beggars." * * *

"But the land question was older than Rome or Sparta. We learn from the 47th chapter of the book of Genesis, that when Joseph the Hebrew was prime minister of Egypt, he enacted there a limited form of the single tax, and saved the nation in time of famine. The landed proprietors surrendered their lands to the crown, retaining possession of them on condition of paying a yearly rental of one-fifth of the produce." * * *

"Thomas Paine said: 'There could be no such thing as landed property originally. Man did not make the earth, and though he had a natural right to occupy it, he had no right to locate as his property in perpetuity any part of it.' This is no doubt what Jefferson meant when he declared that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living (Works of Thos. Jefferson, Washington's ed., III., 106.) Thomas Carlyle said that land was not the property of any generation, but that 'properly speaking the land belongs to these two: To the almighty God and to all His children of men' (Past and Present, III., 8.) William H. Seward recognized this mighty truth when, in his speech on the Higher Law, delivered in the U. S. Senate March 11, 1850, he declared: 'The territory is a part of the common heritage of mankind, bestowed upon them by the Creator of the Universe.' And that grand old free-soiler, Galusha A. Grow of Connecticut, saw it also, when he spoke in Congress March 30, 1852, on 'Man's Right to the Soil,' saying: 'As the means of sustaining life are derived almost entirely from the soil, every person has a right to so much of the earth's surface as is necessary for his support; and further, 'That every consideration of justice and humanity calls upon us to restore man to his natural rights to the soil.'"

The Buffalo platform, adopted in 1852, contained this declaration: 'All men have a natural right to a portion of the soil; and that as the use of the soil is indispensable to life, the right of all men to the soil is as sacred as the right to life itself.' Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, the great agnostic, said: 'I am satisfied that all human beings are entitled to the essentials of life: that is to say, to water, to air, and to land.' But it is needless to add authorities upon the subject. To quote but a line from each of the great men who have endorsed, recognized and proclaimed this principle would require a volume many times the size of this pamphlet."

"We have seen that in all ages learned men have almost universally conceded that all men have an equal right to the use of the earth. But if nobody had ever conceded this right—if everybody had disputed it—that fact of itself could not destroy the validity of that right. Natural rights exist regardless of what men may say either for or against them. They belong to man by virtue of his birth into this world, and are inferred from the very fact of his existence because necessary to life itself. Men do not create them, and men cannot alter them. No man has a greater right to be upon earth than another, for we all are in obedience to the same natural law. None of us are here of our own free will. But we are here, and in the words of a distinguished statesman of happy memory, 'It is a condition which con-

fronts us; not a theory.' All of us have the same necessities, and, generally, the same hopes and the same desires. Therefore it must follow that the God who put us here and gave us the same yearnings and hopes and wants, gave us also equal rights to attain those things which are necessary to the life, liberty and happiness of us all."

To quote Jefferson again: 'Men are born free and with equal opportunities; not equal mental force or physical endurance, but opportunities to live and labor upon the earth and enjoy the fruits of their industry.'

Jefferson states the truth precisely. Without equal opportunities there can be no such thing as equal rights. He who gave us equal rights, gave us at the same time equal opportunities also. If not, why did He in the very first order given to humanity, place this common injunction upon all mankind: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. It surely was not intended that mankind should be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth for the few men who by the artifice of human laws should get control of the earth and deny access thereto to all the rest of mankind. I cannot believe that God, by the natural laws to which he has subjected us, would compel us to bring children into the world, if He had intended that those children should have no right to stand upon the earth which they were expressly commanded to replenish. And yet there are millions of men in this country alone, sparsely settled as it is, in comparison with older nations of the earth who have no right under the laws of the land to force a plow into a single foot of the soil of the United States; and this, too, while millions of acres are held out of use. Why, incredible as it may seem, the entire population of the United States could be put into the single state of Texas without making that state any more populous, in proportion to area, than Holland is to-day."

"Now, if the soil originally belonged to mankind, and not to few, how and when and where did mankind part with that right? They did not part with it. No man can acquire the right to monopolize natural resources. Mankind cannot yield up a natural right, and if they attempted to do so they could not thus barter away the rights of their children; for, as David sang in the 115th Psalm, 'the earth hath He given to the children of men.'"

A REAL GOOD STORY. I was told a real good story by a farmer the other day. The farmer said he asked one of our officials if the object of the new paper was to corner the county printing. The official replied: 'Why no; what we want is to put in competition and bring down the price of printing for the tax-payers. As it is now there is no competition. The Record has no outfit to do our work and we have to go to the Kicker, and he charges so unreasonable.'"

What do you think of that—after rejecting my bid of \$90 and paying the Record \$275 for the ballot job in 1902? I could hardly believe my informant, although I know him to be a truthful man. The reason there has been no competition in public printing is because the officials who control it have refused to obey the law and let such printing to the best advantage of tax-payers. Of late a little of the work has been let in accordance with law, and in every case excepting the primary ballots, the Kicker was the lowest bidder. But when it comes to a real big mess of pie, the Kicker is given no chance."

Let us take, for instance the notices of ditch No. 4 and the North Cut ditch. These notices were given to the Record. The court paid \$316.13 for the No. 4 ditch notice—over the protest of Judge Hutchason. The charge was MORE THAN DOUBLE THE LIMIT PERMITTED BY LAW. But it was paid by the assent of a Republican and Democratic county judge."

At the time this was allowed the bill for the other ditch notice was on file for \$300. Protests caused by the allowance of the first bill caused the entire court to refuse the second bill, and it was withdrawn. The court had no right to pay a cent from the general fund. The expense of a ditch can only be paid legally from the taxes collected from the ditch district. In each case the petitioners must give bond for all costs."

The notice which the court refused to pay was for the ditch petitioned by Ben Gratz, et. al. Objectors appealed from the county court to the circuit court and defeated Gratz and his proposed ditch. It fell through—at the cost of Gratz. Last winter Mr. Gratz and Mr. Buchanan came to the Kicker office saying they had another ditch notice to be published and wanted me to make them a reasonable rate. I asked Mr. Gratz if he had paid the

\$300 for the North Cut notice demanded by the Record. His reply was: 'No, nor I aint going to. If they were reasonable with their charges I would pay it, but now they can go to h—l.' I printed Mr. Gratz's notice for him for \$48.80."

In the mean time the Benton Bank had advanced money on the ditch notice and the claim was assigned to the bank. The court records will show that last April the Benton Bank, assignee, was allowed \$300 for this very notice—the cost of which had been adjudged by the circuit court against Gratz, et. al., and which Mr. Gratz refused to pay—and it was your money, Mr. Taxpayer, that paid it—just as it was your money that paid \$15,000 for digging a well that is no better—if as good—as the well at the mill, which costs \$300."

Now, with all the officials as stockholders of the new "Democratic" paper, and nearly all of them stockholders in the bank, and all of these linked with the various business concerns of the county and that a "community of interests" for your whiskers?"

And yet every mother's son of them will tell you that they oppose trusts and corporations! And the joke of it is that you believe them and continue them in power. Will you never get on to the game?"

WILL YOU WAKE UP.

Producers of Scott county, the Kicker wants you to get busy. Get together and pledge yourselves to do all in your power from now until the November election. Don't wait for your neighbor to start. Start yourself."

So far as possible the Socialist vote is suppressed and delayed. It may be a month before we know the vote cast at the primaries in Missouri. But I do know that Dunklin county cast 105 Socialist votes and Stoddard county cast 97."

It's coming! You are better organized and far ahead of the comrades in adjoining counties. You have a local newspaper that they have not. Considering these things, the showing of Dunklin and Stoddard counties is wonderful."

It's coming. Push it along."

The thing for you to do is to become active. Talk to your brother toilers and set them to thinking. Give them something to read. If you have no literature, send me a quarter and I will mail you a dozen pamphlets. I know how hard it is to answer all the foolish questions of the old party adherents. They will swallow a Democratic or Republican ticket without question, but when it comes to Socialism they want to know."

Revive interest in your local. This is important. Pay your dues. This is also important. The men who contribute the old party campaign funds will not put a cent in the Socialist campaign fund—and, in the end, you pay the whole bill anyway."

Let the organization be thorough and in good working order by September 1. Let there be funds in the treasury to bring in and pay for good speakers. Unlike the old parties, our speakers are not financed by the privileged class. Our speakers are usually working men themselves and must be paid from the nickels and dimes gathered from working men."

The county central committee is also the campaign committee that should see to it that every effort is made to carry the county. A victory in Scott county this fall means activity and hope in adjoining counties, and we may be able to elect a working-class congressman two years hence—and two years later a president."

We are sure to poll more than a million votes in the nation this fall. We may poll three million. If we poll two million this fall we are almost sure of winning the presidency in 1912. The history of Socialism indicates that it doubles every year—one Socialist will make one convert on an average. Accordingly, if the nation polls 2,000,000 votes this fall, we ought to poll 8,000,000 in 1912. That will land a president. And whether or not this is accomplished depends on the working class. You need not expect the landlords and bankers to do it. Take hold yourself."

The Republicans are almost sure to carry Missouri this fall. In the country the weakness of Goward was almost pathetic in the primaries. And the machine cannot steal the vote of the cities in November as they did in the primaries. Uncle Sam will be on duty then. And the machine will not try to run it over Uncle Samuel."